USCSI® | ISC2 | CompTIA | EC-Council

Which Cybersecurity Certification Is Right for You?

Cybersecurity hiring decisions in 2026 are increasingly shaped by one factor above all others: credentials. According to Fortinet's 2026 Global Cybersecurity Skills Gap Report, *91%* of IT decision-makers prefer candidates with technology-focused certifications, and *92%* say they are likely to invest in AI-related cybersecurity training or certifications in the next 12 months.

For professionals evaluating where to place that investment, the choice of certification body matters as much as the credential itself. This blog breaks down the top cybersecurity certifications from ***USCSI®***, ***ISC2***, ***CompTIA***, and ***EC-Council*** across all levels to compare.

Beginner Level Cybersecurity Certifications

Beginner-level cybersecurity credentials establish the foundational knowledge professionals need to understand threats, protective practices, and core security principles. Listed below are the best cybersecurity certifications in 2026 for beginner-level.

Certified Cybersecurity General Practitioner (CCGP™) by USCSI®

Designed for anyone entering cybersecurity regardless of technical background, CCGP™ covers intrusion detection, infrastructure vulnerabilities, DDoS attacks, cybercrime identification, IoT security, and internet privacy.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $389*** (all inclusive)
Duration	4-20 weeks
Format	Self-paced / Instructor-led Prep Mode
Study Materials	Included: 3 study books, videos, practice codes
Experience Required	None

Why Choose USCSI®

- Vendor-neutral, I.C.E. member, recognized across 150+ countries
- All study materials, exam fee, and practice codes are included in one price
- Self-paced and instructor-led options available
- Content vetted by top **20+ SMEs**
- PayEase installments and up to **10%** Turbo Cert discount available for professionals from **Fortune 500** or top global organizations
- **3-year** structured renewal pathway and lifelong digital badge included

Certified in Cybersecurity (CC) by ISC2

CC covers security principles, business continuity, access controls, network security, and security operations. Listed below is key information:

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $199*** exam only
Study Materials	Not included but available separately
Experience Required	None

Security+ (SY0-701) by CompTIA

Security+ is widely required for US government and DoD contracting roles and is among the most recognized entry-level credentials in the market. Key information is listed below.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $425*** exam only
Format	Maximum 90 questions, 90 minutes, passin score 750/900
Study Materials	Not included, purchased separately
Experience Required	Recommended 2 years, not mandatory

Ethical Hacking Essentials (EHE) by EC-Council

EHE is a narrow entry-level credential aimed specifically at professionals targeting an offensive security career path. It covers ethical hacking fundamentals, web application security, network security, and penetration testing basics.

Detail	Information
Fee	Approximately ***US $199*** exam only
Format	75 questions, 2 hours
Mode	Online ECC Exam Center
Experience Required	None

Intermediate Level Cybersecurity Certifications

Mid-level cybersecurity credentials are designed for professionals who move beyond foundational awareness into applied security practice. Listed below are the best mid-level cybersecurity certifications.

Certified Cybersecurity Consultant (CCC™) by USCSI®

CCC™ is built for IT professionals who assess risk, develop secure architectures, and advise organizations on cybersecurity posture. The curriculum spans cryptography, security architecture, machine learning, data science, and fraud identification.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $699*** (all inclusive)
Duration	4 to 24 weeks
Format	Self-paced / Instructor-led Prep Mode
Study Materials	Included: 3 study books, videos, case studies, practice codes
Experience Required	Associate degree + 5 years IT OR Bachelor's degree + up to 5 years OR CCGP™/equivalent

Also Read: *Cybersecurity Certifications: Your Strategic Career Investment for 2026* by USCSI®'s resource examines why structured certification pathways accelerate careers, covering in-demand skills, emerging roles, and how to position yourself in a tightening cybersecurity job market.

Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP) by ISC2

SSCP targets IT practitioners administering security programs and bridges the gap between ISC2's CC and CISSP. It covers access controls, risk identification, incident response, cryptography, and network security.

Detail	Information
Fee	*US $249* exam only
Study Materials	Not included
Experience Required	1 year of paid experience in at least one SSCP domain

Cybersecurity Analyst (CySA+) by CompTIA

CySA+ focuses on defensive security, threat detection, vulnerability management, and incident response. It is DoD 8140 approved for CSSP Analyst roles and is exam-only.

Detail	Information
Fee	*US $404–$425* exam only
Duration	Up to 85 questions, 165 minutes
Format	Not included
Study Materials	Recommended Security+ and 4 years of hands-on experience

Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH v13) by EC-Council

CEH covers ethical hacking methodology, malware threats, social engineering, and penetration testing. The combined cost of the exam, application fee, and study materials makes it one of the higher-cost intermediate credentials.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $950–$1,199*** exam + ***US $100*** application fee (self-study)
Exam Format	125 questions, 4 hours
Study Materials	Not included, official training ***$1,899–$3,499*** separately
Experience Required	2 years of IT security OR official EC-Council training

Advanced Level Cybersecurity Certifications

Senior cybersecurity credentials are built for professionals who direct security strategy, manage organizational risk, and lead enterprise-wide security programs. Listed below are the top senior-level cybersecurity certifications compared:

Certified Senior Cybersecurity Specialist (CSCS™) by USCSI®

CSCS™ is one of the best online cybersecurity certifications built for senior IT professionals, security managers, and aspiring CISOs who need to lead organizational security strategy

The curriculum covers CISO-level leadership, security regulations, AI-assisted threat detection, cloud AI fraud prevention, and business continuity management.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $898*** (all inclusive)
Format	Self-paced / Instructor-led Prep Mode with 4 to 24 week duration
Online AI Proctored Exam	70 multiple-choice questions, 100 minutes, and 70% passing score
Study Materials	Included: 3 study books, videos, case studies, practice codes
Experience Required	Varies by 3 dedicated eligibility paths

Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) by ISC2

CISSP is the global gold standard for security management, architecture, and leadership roles like CISO, Security Director, and Security Architect. Key details are given below:

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $749*** exam only
Study Materials	Not included, external training $300–$3,200
Experience Required	5 years paid full-time in 2+ of 8 CISSP domains

SecurityX / CASP+ (CAS-005) by CompTIA

SecurityX is a hands-on technical credential for security architects and senior engineers implementing enterprise security solutions. SecurityX focuses on technical execution, covering zero trust, cryptography, cloud security, and SIEM integration.

Detail	Information
Fee	***US $529*** exam only
Exam Format	Maximum 90 questions, 165 minutes, pass/fail only
Mode	Online, Pearson VUE remote proctored or in-person test center
Experience Required	Recommended 10 years of IT experience, including 5 years of technical security

Certified Chief Information Security Officer (CCISO) by EC-Council

CCISO is an executive-level credential for current and aspiring CISOs, covering information security governance, risk management, and strategic planning. The key information is given in the table below

C|CISO™
CERTIFIED CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER

Detail	Information
Fee	*US $999–$1,199* exam only
Exam Format	150 questions, 2.5 hours
Mode	Online (EC-Council remote proctoring or Pearson VUE test center)
Study Materials	Not included, recommended training $2,500–$3,500
Experience Required	5 years in 3 of 5 CCISO domains, verified via EC-Council eligibility application

Final Thought

As the cybersecurity talent gap widens and employer expectations rise, the professionals who move forward are those who invest in structured, credentialed learning before it becomes a hiring requirement. The right certification body, at the right level, is not a career enhancement; it is the foundation every cybersecurity professional needs in 2026.